



# News Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Vicky Waters

[Vicky.Waters@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Vicky.Waters@parks.ca.gov)

916-653-5115

## **California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways Encourages Boating Safety During Labor Day Weekend**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) anticipates an increased number of recreational boaters during the Labor Day weekend on the State's waterways, and is urging boaters to take the proper safety precautions.

[California's 2013 boating accident statistics](#) show that three out of four boating accident drowning victims were not wearing life jackets. In addition, this year's drought conditions have impacted many local waterways resulting in potential boating hazards.

"Drought conditions may reduce water levels, but not the dangers," said DBW's Acting Deputy Director Col. Christopher C. Conlin, USMC (Ret.). "Life jackets can save lives in the event a boat runs aground, hits a snag or a log. We strongly encourage everyone on a vessel to wear a lifejacket, plan ahead, and take the appropriate precautions while recreating on the water."

Here are some steps every boater can take to reduce the risk of accidents, prevent serious injuries and ensure a safe and enjoyable weekend:

### **Wear A Lifejacket**

Wear a properly fitted, Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Children under 13 years of age, anyone being towed behind a vessel, or persons operating a personal watercraft are required by law to wear a lifejacket. In addition, every person on a vessel must have a lifejacket available. No matter how low water levels are, all persons are encouraged to wear a life jacket, especially with children and on cold or fast inland waters where lifeguards are not stationed. Even when cooling off in the water, boaters should be alert for rip currents and sneaker waves. For more information on lifejackets, please visit: [www.WearItCalifornia.com](http://www.WearItCalifornia.com).

## **Conserve Water**

With record-setting drought conditions in California, it is imperative that we all do our part to conserve water. Boaters are encouraged to repurpose unused water from their trip and skip the boat wash. Unless you need to rinse the salt water, just wipe the boat down with a damp cloth. For more tips on water conservation, visit [www.SaveOurWater.com](http://www.SaveOurWater.com).

## **Low Water Hazards**

Recreational boating has been impacted by drought conditions in the State. When on the water, adjust boating activities to the drought conditions. Areas that were easily boated a year ago may be different and unfamiliar to boaters this year, potentially increasing boating dangers. For instance, many lakes may have decreased boat launch ramps available, or reduced speed limits. We encourage boaters to keep a proper lookout for any obstructions, including trees, snags, and sandbars.

## **Alcohol**

The side effects of alcohol – impaired judgment, reduced balance, poor coordination – can be magnified by the boating environment of sun, wave action and dehydration. Check for local rules; alcohol is banned on some waterways at holiday periods. If you do drink, wear a life jacket.

## **Plan Ahead**

Boaters should plan ahead and find out if their favorite boating spot has any operating restrictions. Operating boats on rivers or the ocean greatly differs from boating on lakes. Boaters should check navigation maps for water and weather conditions, and better yet, invite someone with local experience to show you how to safely boat in unfamiliar areas.

For more safety tips or to view California's boating laws, please visit [www.BoatCalifornia.com](http://www.BoatCalifornia.com).

## **Reporting a Boating Accident in California**

*State law requires boaters involved in accidents to file a written report with DBW when a person dies, disappears or requires medical attention beyond first aid. A report is also required when an accident results in damage to a vessel or other property exceeding \$500 or there is a complete loss of a vessel. [Boating Accident Report Form](#)*

## **About California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW)**

*DBW promotes on-the-water safety education and helps develop convenient public access to the waterways through programs funded by vessel registration fees, boating fuel tax dollars and boating facility construction loan payments.*

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## **California State Parks Mission**

*To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.*